

## Message Text

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FOL BANGKOK 15707 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JUNE 1, 1978  
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

UNCLAS BANGKOK 15707

STATE FOR S/NM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJ: OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION DATA

REF: STATE 098632

1. PER REFTEL FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A CONSENSUS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THAI OFFICE OF NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD (ONCB); POLICE NARCOTIC SUPPRESSION CENTER (PNSC), DEA AND OTHER APPROPRIATE EMBASSY OFFICES.

2. PRIORITY A, PER REFTEL PAR. 2

A. THE ONLY ESTIMATE OF ACREAGE BEING USED TO GROW OPIUM POPPY IS THE PREVIOUS UNRELIABLE FIGURE OF APPROXIMATELY 12,000 ACRES.

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THE ESTIMATE IS BEING UP-DATED USING MORE RELIABLE RESEARCH METHODS AND A NEW ESTIMATE IS EXPECTED WITHIN 30 DAYS AND WILL FORWARD THIS ESTIMATE WHEN AVAILABLE. THE ONCB ESTIMATES THAT SWIDDEN TYPE AGRICULTURE INCLUDING POPPY FIELDS IS TAKING PLACE ON 24,852 ACRES OF LAND LOCATED IN CHIANG MAI, CHIANG RAI, AND NAN PROVINCES. THE ESTIMATE IS BASED UPON PHOTO INTERPRETATION OF SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE AREA POSSESSED BY THE NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

ONCB IS PLANNING AN ON SITE INSPECTION OF THE IDENTIFIED FIELDS DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 1978. TO ASCERTAIN ACTUAL PERCENTAGE OF LAND USED TO GROW OPIUM POPPY. THIS SURVEY WILL PROVIDE US WITH ANOTHER 'FIX' ON THE SITUATION.

B. THE NORMAL PLANTING SEASON IS DURING THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER; AND, THE CROPS ARE HARVESTED DURING THE MONTHS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY. WHERE DOUBLE CROPPING IS PRACTICED, THE SECOND CROP IS PLANTED IN NOVEMBER AND HARVESTED IN MARCH; THE 1ST CROP IN THESE CASES IS PLANTED IN LATE AUGUST EARLY OCTOBER AND HARVESTED IN NOVEMBER.

C. DOUBLE CROPPING IS KNOWN TO TAKE PLACE IN CHAING MAI, CHIANG RAI, NAN, AND MAE HONG SON PROVINCES BUT IS NOT EXTENSIVE. THE AMOUNT OF ACRES INVOLVED IS NOT KNOWN.

D. THE ONCB REPORTS AN AVERAGE OF 3.75 TO 5 KGS. OF OPIUM HARVESTED PER ACRE.

E. THE PERCENTAGE OF MORPHINE FOUND IN SAMPLES OF OPIUM GUM SEIZED BY ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES HAS RANGED BETWEEN 4.5 TO 6.5 PER CENT.

### 3. PRIORITY B

A. LABORATORIES IN THAILAND GENERALLY OPERATE FOR TEN (10) DAY PERIODS PRODUCING 20 TO 30 KGS. OF HEROIN OR MORPHINE BASE.  
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THE TREND IS AGAINST THE STOCKPILING OF OPIUM AT LABORATORY SITES CONSEQUENTLY THE LABORATORIES DO NOT OPERATE FOR ANY EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME IN ANY ONE LOCATION NOR DO THEY PRODUCE LARGE QUANTITIES OF HEROIN DURING ANY ONE PERIOD OF OPERATION.

TO AVOID DETECTION THE LABORATORIES ARE PREDOMINATELY MOBILE, CONVERTING EXISTING STOCK ON HAND AND THEN EITHER CLOSING TEMPORARILY OR MOVING TO ANOTHER LOCATION.

THE MAJORITY OF OPIUM AVAILABLE IN THAILAND AND BURMA IS CONVERTED INTO HEROIN/MORPHINE IN QUASIPERMANENT REFINERIES IN BURMA. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT FIFTEEN (15) REFINERIES ARE IN OPERATION ON THE BURMESE SIDE OF THAI/BURMA BORDER ADJACENT TO CHIANG MAI, CHIANG RAI, AND MAE HONG SON PROVINCES OF THAILAND.

B. MORPHINE ALKALOID CONTENT OF OPIUM FOUND IN THE LABORATORIES RANGES FROM 4.5 TO 6.5 PER CENT.

C. PURITY OF HEROIN DISCOVERED IN THE LABORATORIES IS 96 TO 99 PER CENT FOR HEROIN #4 AND 30 TO 60 PER CENT FOR HEROIN #3.

D. MORPHINE IN THAILAND IS RARELY 'CUT' AND IS GENERALLY USED IN ITS PUREST FORM. HOWEVER, LACTOSE AND MANITOL HAVE BEEN FOUND AT LABORATORY SITES.

E. THE AMOUNTS OF CHEMICALS USED IN THE CONVERSION PROCESS(ES) VARY DEPENDING ON THE QUANTITY OF THE DRUG TO BE CONVERTED. THE TYPES OF CHEMICALS AND FOREIGN AGENTS USED IN VARIOUS PROCESSES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) RAW OPIUM TO CRUDE MORPHINE BASE
  - LIME ROCK
- 2) CRUDE MORPHINE BASE TO '999' BLOCKS OF MORPHINE
  - HYDROCHLORIC ACID
  - BONE CARBON

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- BLEACHING POWDER
- 3) CRUDE MORPHINE TO HEROIN BASE (HEROIN #2)
    - ACETIC ANHYDRIDE
    - CHLOROFORM
    - CARBON
    - SODIUM BICARBONATE OF AMMONIA
  - 4) HEROIN BASE TO HEROIN #3
    - CHLOROFORM 'GREASE'
    - HYDROCHLORIC ACID
    - STRONG TEA
    - STRYCHNINE HYDROCHLORIDE OR NITRATE/SCOPOLAMINE
    - COFFEINE/HYDROBROMIDE/PROCANE HYDROCHLORIDE/QUININE
    - FOOD COLORING
  - 5) HEROIN BASE TO ALCOHOL PI TSU - ALCOHOL
  - 6) ALCOHOL PI TSU TO HEROIN #4
    - HYDROCHLORIC ACID
    - ALCOHOL
    - ETHER
    - LIME ROCK
  - 7) '999' MORPHINE BLOCKS TO HEROIN #4
    - CHLOROFORM
    - CHARCOAL
    - ACETIC ANHYDRIDE OR ACETYL CHLORIDE

#### 4. PRIORITY C

A. OPIUM IN THAILAND IS PRESENTLY A RAIN FEED CROP.

B. GENERAL SPACING OF PLANTS IS IRREGULAR SINCE THE MOST COMMON METHOD OF SEEDING IS SCATTERING BY HAND. HOWEVER, IN A FEW INSTANCES FIELDS ARE PLANTED USING A SPACING OF 6 TO 8 INCHES BETWEEN PLANTS.

C. THE OPIUM POPPY HERE IS A COOL SEASON CROP GENERALLY BETWEEN  
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THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER THROUGH FEB. (SEE PAR. 2. PRIORITY A,  
B.RE DOUBLE CROPPING.)

D. HARVESTING IS DONE BY HAND PODS ARE LANCED VERTICALLY WITH  
AN AVERAGE OF FIVE INCISIONS PER POD.

E. OPIUM POPPY HERE REQUIRES RICH TOP SOIL, COOL WEATHER AND THUS  
IS PLANTED AT ELEVATIONS OF ABOUT 1,000 METERS, AND MINIMUM RAIN  
FALL (1,500 MM. PER ANNUM). WHITEHOUSE UNQUOTE VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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